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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002081

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT BEGINS COMMITTEE ALLOCATION PROCESS;
DEPUTY SPEAKER SAYS CONSTITUTION REVIEW TO BEGIN IN
SEPTEMBER

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret M.
Scobey for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Khalid al-Attiyah told Embassy Legal Adviser June 18 that committee formation should be completed within a week. The CoR session broke early in the afternoon so that the CoR leadership and political bloc leaders could meet to discuss committee formation mechanisms, particularly the allocation of committee chairs. The CoR also authorized the bylaws committee to produce a draft law on replacing members who have left to become ministers. Attiyah said he did not think the constitutional review committee would be formed and begin its work until the beginning of September. End Summary

Committee Formation Update

¶2. (C) In a June 18 introductory meeting with Embassy Legal Adviser, Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Khalid al-Attiyah speculated that committee formation would be completed within a week. During the June 18 session, Attiyah urged the political blocs to identify the committees they wanted to chair and the CoR members they wanted to assign to specific committees (as well as deputy chairs). The CoR voted to authorize the Presidency Commission (Speaker and two Deputies) to meet with the CoR political bloc leaders to discuss the framework for committee formation after the end of the session.

¶3. (C) Separately, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) member and CoR Kurdish bloc leader Fuad Ma'sum told PolOff that he was expecting a stiff fight on assigning CoR committee chairs. The working theory for dividing the committee chairmanships, according to Ma'sum, is to allocate one committee for every 11 seats won by a bloc. For example, the Kurds with their 53 seats in the CoR would be given 5 committees. The remaining breakdown would then be: 12 committees for the Shia Coalition; 5 for Tawafuq; 1 for Hewar; and one for Iraqiyya. NOTE: Other contacts in the CoR (see para 4) have told us there is an amendment to this arrangement pending whereby one committee would be taken from each of the three main parties - Kurds, Shia Coalition, and Tawafuq - to give to minority parties such as the Chaldo-Assyrian Christians. END NOTE

¶4. (C) Ma'sum immediately ruled out maintaining the

Kurdish leadership of the Legal Committee (Kurdish member Muhsin Sa'adoun had headed this committee as a Transitional National Assembly (TNA) member). Sa'adoun and UIC member Iman Khaleel al-Assadi both told PolOff separately that UIC member Humam al-Hammudi would likely be the next chairman of the legal committee. Ma'sum acknowledged that the Kurds were hoping to get the Security Committee, since they did not get any of the security portfolios in the cabinet. However, neither the Shia nor the Sunni Arabs would relinquish control over that committee. Instead, the Kurds were considering requesting the Refugees/Internally Displaced Persons and Health/Environment Committees. (NOTE: IDPs have become a Kurdish Alliance concern because of the ongoing issue with the Faily Kurds, the Shia subset of Kurds. Many Faily Kurds currently live outside of Iraq and wish to return, but they are unable to get Iraqi documentation to return. The Kurdish Alliance is hoping to secure Faily Kurd support, not only in Baghdad but in border areas like Diyala. The Faily Kurds have historically supported the Shia Coalition in national elections. END NOTE)

15. (C) SCIRI CoR member Ijra Faisal Oda told PolOff June 18 that committee allocation should consider that more than one minority is represented by the CoR. Oda rejected the initial allocation (Shia Coalition 12, Kurdish Alliance 5, Tawafuq 5, Iraqiyya 2, minorities 1), telling PolOff that she recommended to Shia Coalition negotiators that 4 additional committees be allocated to minorities by subtracting one each from the four major political blocs.

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16. (C) Both Chaldo-Assyrian Christian Yonadam Kanna and independent Sunni CoR member Mithal al-Alusi confirmed to PolOff that all CoR minorities are included in the committee allocation negotiations. While Kanna was pessimistic about minority prospects in these negotiations, al-Alusi asserted that this is the best opportunity to push for minority-chaired committees. He predicted minority party members will receive four committee chairs.

Constitutional Review Committee Likely to Be Delayed

17. (C) Attiyah told the Legal Adviser that he did not think the constitutional review committee would begin its work until the beginning of September. He cited both the desire of political party leaders to delay the review until after government formation and the upcoming CoR break as reasons for its later start. (NOTE: Article 142 of the constitution requires formation of the committee "at the beginning" of the work of the CoR. Given the CoR's slow organizational process, a September formation date is arguably consistent with this requirement. END NOTE.) He agreed that TNA Constitutional Committee Chair and SCIRI member Humam Hammudi would be a candidate to chair the review committee. He stated that no decisions had been made on the organization of the committee, though he expected it would have approximately 25 members.

Bylaws Committee Charged to Produce Draft Law on Replacing Members

18. Attiyah said the CoR would discuss a new law on replacing CoR members (who have left to become

ministers, PM, or to join the Presidency Council). He added that the IECI had told the CoR leadership that the CoR had authority to decide how the members should be replaced as long as the replacement members were candidates in the December election. (NOTE: Post had understood that the current electoral law would be applied, which requires the next available candidate on the applicable governorate list to replace a departing member (Article 14(1) END NOTE.) He said there are two main schools of thought: (a) to retain the current requirement that departing members be replaced by the next available member from the same governorate list, regardless of party affiliation and (b) revise the law to allow departing members to be replaced by someone from the same party from the applicable governorate list. The CoR voted to authorize the bylaws committee to produce draft legislation on replacing CoR members. Muhsin Sa'adoun provided PolFSN with a copy of a draft law that would be discussed by the bylaws committee; it utilizes the latter school of thought.

Pending Legislation

19. (C) Attiyah added that some laws had already been sent to the CoR for its consideration, including a financial management law and a new Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) law. He cited as a priority the need for a new foreign investment law.
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